
Glossary

- A -

Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) - A water management technique by which water is pumped through wells into a suitable aquifer during periods of excess water (wet season) for later recovery and use during periods of water deficits (dry season).

Acceleration/deceleration lanes - Lanes used for vehicular acceleration and deceleration usually consisting of an added roadway lane that permits integration and merging of slower moving vehicles into the main vehicular stream.

Access - a way or means of approach to provide vehicular or pedestrian physical entrance to a property; capable of being reached. Accessibility can be determined on a variety of levels; physical, economic, and social.

Adaptive reuse - the development of a new use for an older building or a building originally designed for a specific purpose.

Aesthetic - the perception of an individual of the visual quality of natural or created environments that are pleasing to the eye.

Affordable - The cost of goods, services or housing that is within the means of a low- and moderate-income household as defined by state and federal legislation.

Air pollution - the presence of contaminants in the air in concentrations beyond the normal dispersive ability of the air and that directly interfere with health, safety or comfort or with the full use and enjoyment of property.

Alluvium - Clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar detrital material deposited by moving water.

Ambient - An encompassing atmosphere; existing background noise.

Amenity - a natural or created feature that enhances the aesthetic quality, visual appeal or makes more attractive or satisfying a particular property, place or area.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - a 1990 federal law designed to bring disabled Americans into the economic mainstream by providing them equal access to jobs, transportation, public facilities, and services.

Annexation - The process by which a municipality or other governing authority absorbs surrounding land and brings it under its jurisdiction; the incorporation of a land area into an existing community with a resulting change in the boundaries of that community.

Arterial street system - Street system utilized for high volumes of traffic; usually with controlled access and no street parking.

Aquifer - an underground geologic formation that contains a usable supply of water.

Archaeological site - land or water areas that show evidence of artifacts of human, plant or animal activity, usually dating from historical periods of which only vestiges remain.

Area plan - see **study area**

- B -

Bikeway - a pathway, often paved and separated from streets and sidewalks, designed to be used by bicyclists or other pedestrian users.

Bosque: Spanish word for a riverine forest or thicket.

Brackish water - a mixture of fresh and salt water.

Brownfields - abandoned, idled, or underused industrial and commercial facilities or sites where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

Buffering - a design or a physical development technique that provides physical separation from adjacent incompatible or offensive land uses.

Buffer strip - open spaces, landscaped areas, fences, walls or berms or any combination thereof used to physically separate or screen one use or property from another so as to visually shield or block noise, lights, or other nuisances.

Building codes - legislative regulations that prescribe the materials, requirements and methods to be used in the construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and repair of buildings. Several national building codes have been established for adoption by individual states.

- C -

Capacity, roadway - the maximum hourly rate at which vehicles can reasonably be expected to traverse a point or uniform section of a lane or roadway during a given time period under the prevailing roadway, traffic, and control condition.

Capital improvement - when pertaining to government, an acquisition of real property, major construction projects, or acquisition or expensive equipment expected to last a long time.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) - the multiyear scheduling of public physical improvements based on studies of fiscal resources available and the choice of specific improvements to be constructed for a period of five or six year into the future; a timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means and sources of financing each project.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) - a colorless, odorless highly toxic gas that is a normal by-product of incomplete fossil fuel combustion.

Census - an official periodic enumeration of a designated geographic area's population, housing and other characteristics.

Central Business District (CBD) - the largest, most intensively developed, mixed-use area within a city, usually containing, in addition to major retail uses, governmental offices, service uses professional, cultural, recreational, and entertainment establishments and uses; residences, hotels and motels; appropriate industrial activities; and transportation facilities.

Circulation - systems, structures, and physical improvements for the movement of people, goods, water, air, sewage, communication signals, or power by such means as streets, highways, railways, waterways, towers, airways, pipes and conduits and the handling of people and goods by such means as terminals, stations, warehouses, and other storage building of transshipment points.

City planning - the decision-making process in which goals and objectives are established, existing resources and conditions analyzed, strategies developed, and legislation and policies enacted and adopted, land development requests are analyzed and acted upon, to achieve the goals and objectives as they relate to the growth and development of cities and communities.

Clean Air Act - a federal act establishing national air quality standards.

Cluster - a development design technique that concentrates building on a part of the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and preservation of environmentally valuable or sensitive features.

Community facility - a building or structure owned and operated by a governmental agency to provide a community service to the public.

Commute trip reduction strategy - a means of reducing the number of miles traveled in a vehicle in order to reduce traffic congestion. Strategies include telecommuting, electronic communications, variable work weeks and flextime.

Commuter POE - a point of entry which is dedicated exclusively to passenger traffic exclusively.

Comprehensive Plan - a comprehensive, long-range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community or region that typically includes inventory and analytic sections leading to recommendations for the community's future economic development, housing, recreation and open space, transportation, community facilities, and land use, all related to the community's goals and objectives for these elements.

Connectivity - the ability of a transportation network to provide for an adequate number of alternate routes or connections between different areas.

Corridor - broad geographical band connecting major sources of trips.

Conservation easement - the grant of a property right stipulating that the described land will remain in its natural state and precluding future or additional development.

Cost-benefit analysis - an analytic method whereby the primary and secondary costs of a proposed project are measured against the benefits to be received to determine the feasibility of the project.

CPAC (Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee) - In the City of El Paso, an advisory board of citizens responsible for designing and evaluating citizen involvement opportunities in the comprehensive planning process.

- D -

Density - the average number of persons, households or dwellings per unit of land; the number of families, individuals, dwelling units, households or housing structures per unit of land.

Desalinization - salt removed from seawater or brackish water.

Design fit - consistency in scale, quality or character between new and existing development so as to avoid abrupt and/or severe differences.

Design standards - a set of guidelines defining parameters to be followed in site and/or building design and development.

Development - the physical development of a parcel of land, usually involving the construction or renovation of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill, or land disturbance; and any use or extension of the use of land.

Drainage - (1) surface water runoff; (2) the removal of surface water of groundwater from land by drains, grading, or other means, which include runoff controls to minimize erosion and sedimentation during and after construction of development.

- E -

Easement - a grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owners to and/or use by the public, a corporation of another person or entity.

Effluent - a discharge of liquid waste, with or without treatment, into the environment.

Emission - a discharge of pollutants into the air.

Energy efficient design- Design principles that advocate the efficient use of energy in the design of residential and commercial buildings, special emphasis is placed upon utilizing solar energy and other natural systems to decrease dependence upon conventional energy systems.

Environmentally sensitive area - an area with one or more of the following characteristics: (1) steep slopes; (2) flood plain; (3) soils classified as having high water tables; (4) soils classified as highly erodible, subject to erosion, or highly acidic; (5) land incapable of meeting percolation requirements; (6) land formerly used for landfill operations; (7) fault areas; (8) stream corridors; (9) estuaries; (10) mature stands of native vegetation; (11) aquifer recharge and discharge areas; (12) wetlands and wetland transition areas; (13) habitats of endangered species.

Erosion - the detachment and movement of soil or rock fragments or the wearing away of the land surface by water, wind, ice or gravity.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) - unincorporated area that is contiguous to the corporate boundaries of the municipality and that is located within five miles of those boundaries, in the case of a municipality with 100,000 or more inhabitants as is the case in El Paso per Texas Local Government Code.

- F -

Fault - a rock fracture along which blocks of rock have moved past one another as a result of stresses on the earth's crust.

Flextime - the right of an employee to determine his or her starting and finishing times; used to spread peak hour loads and may be required as part of traffic management systems.

Flood plain - the channel and the relatively flat area adjoining the channel of a natural stream or river that has been or may be covered by floodwater.

Frontage - that side of a lot abutting on a street; the front lot line.

Frontage road - a service road, usually parallel to a highway, designed to reduce the number of driveways that intersect the highway.

Fixed guideway - system of vehicles that can operate on its own guideway including heavy rail systems, light rail systems, monorail, and busway systems.

- G -

Glare - the effect produced by brightness sufficient to cause annoyance, discomfort, or loss of visual performance and visibility.

Grade - (1) the average elevation of the land around a building; (2) the percent of rise or descent of a sloping surface.

Grading - any stripping, cutting, filling, reshaping, or stockpiling of earth or land, including the land in its cut or filled condition, to create new grades.

Ground cover - grasses or other plants and landscaping grown to prevent soil from being blown or washed away.

Groundwater - the supply of freshwater under the surface in an aquifer or geologic formation that forms the natural reservoir for potable water.

Growth management - techniques used by the government to control the rate, amount, location, timing and type of development.

- H -

High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) - vehicles that can carry two or more passengers; HOV lanes are dedicated sections of streets or highways designed for HOVs.

Higher order arterial streets/ major or higher order arterial streets - streets that provide relatively uninterrupted, long distance travel service throughout an urbanized area.

Highest and best use - an appraisal concept that determines the use of a particular property likely to produce the greatest net return in the foreseeable future.

Historic district - a district or zone designated by a local authority or state or federal government within which the buildings, structures, appurtenances, and places are of basic and vital importance because of their association with history; or because of their unique architectural style and scale, including color, proportion, form and architectural detail; or because of their being a part or related to a square, park or area the design or general arrangement of which should be preserved and/or developed according to a fixed plan based on cultural, historical, or architectural motives or purposes.

Historic preservation - the protection, rehabilitation, and restoration of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and artifacts significant in history, architecture, archaeology or culture.

Human scale - the proportional relationship of a particular building, structure, or streetscape element to the human form and function and movement.

HOV - see **high-occupancy vehicle**

- I -

Impact fee - a fee imposed on a development to help finance the cost of improvements or services.

Implementation - carrying out or fulfilling plans and proposals.

Improved lot - (1) a lot upon which a building can be constructed and occupied; (2) a lot with buildings or structures.

Infill - the development of vacant lots in established neighborhoods as opposed to building on large parcels of vacant land in relatively undeveloped areas; the development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant sites in a built-up area.

Infrastructure - the utilities and basic services, such as roads and sewers, essential for the development, operation and growth of a city.

Intensity - the type or level of such things as traffic, pedestrian activity, number and height of structures or noise generated by a land use. The more activity, the greater the intensity of use.

Intensity of use - the number of dwelling units per acre of residential development and floor area ratio (FAR) for nonresidential development, such as commercial, office and industrial.

Interchange - a grade-separated, bridged system of access to and from highways where vehicles may move from one roadway to another without crossing streams of traffic.

Intersection - the location where two or more roadways cross at grade without a bridge.

Intermodal - switching between different types of transportation.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) - A Federal Government Policy that mandates Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop transportation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, that function as a seamless intermodal transportation system.

- J -

joint use- The use of a facility or , set of activities by more than one, usually only two organizations.

- L -

Land use - a description of how land is occupied or utilized; the way in which land is used. Land use is generally described in terms of activities that take place on a given piece of property within the structure. Activities not directly associated with land, such as housing construction, population growth, traffic flow and job development are influenced by the way land is used.

Land Use/Transportation Linkage - The coordination of land use codes with transportation plans in order to address the problems of auto dependency and to encourage accessibility. Land use is more than codes, however. It encompasses the overall built environment. Land use planning involves the size and density of projects, the mixture and segregation of uses, the features of the site design and the balance of housing and jobs.

Landscape - (1) an expanse of property in its natural, undisturbed state; (2) lawns, trees, plants, and other natural materials, such as rock, and wood chips, and decorative features, including sculpture, patterned walks, fountains and pools.

Level of service - a description of traffic conditions along a given roadway or at a particular intersection.

- M -

Major traffic generator - the use or uses that generate a total of five hundred or more vehicle trips per day to and from the use or uses.

Manufactured housing - Housing, such as mobile homes, that is shipped to the site either as a completed unit or as a number of complete sections or rooms which can be joined on-site with a minimum of effort.

Mass transit - a public common carrier transportation system for people having established routes and fixed schedules.

Master plan - see **comprehensive plan**.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - a local group that selects projects, highways and transit to be given funds by TEA-21.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) - a geographic area consisting of a large population nucleus together with adjacent areas having a high degree of economic and social integration.

MGD - millions of gallons per day.

master planned communities- A planning principle whereby entire small communities are organized and designed in detail before any construction occurs to ensure the development of specific environments within the community.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) :

Mitigate - to rectify, repair or compensate for impacts which result from other actions; methods used to alleviate or lessen the impact of development.

Mixed-use - An area that is planned to provide a variety of uses in the same vicinity. A mixed use community includes residences for various income levels, retail shops, schools, and workplaces. Mixed use may also mean combining uses in the same building such as residences located above commercial space.

Mixed-use development - the development of a tract of land, building, or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment, in a compact urban form.: contains a variety of different land uses such as residential, commercial, offices, and other uses.

Modal split - the breakdown of how people get to work, shop, travel to recreational activities, or other origin or destination by type of conveyance.

Mod flow modeling:

Multi-modal - the use of various modes of transportation

- N -

National ambient air quality standards - standards promulgated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency for specified air pollutants, including suspended particulates, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, hydrocarbons, and lead.

Native plants - those plants which are indigenous to an area

Natural recharge - adding water to an aquifer by natural means, such as precipitation, or from lakes and rivers.

Naturalized plants - those plants which are not native to an area but do not require any special care (i.e., additional watering) to survive there

Neighborhood - an area of a community with characteristics that distinguish it from other areas and that may include distinct ethnic or economic characteristics, housing types, schools, or boundaries defined by physical barriers, such as major highways and railroads or natural features such as rivers.

New urbanism- A set of planning principles that focuses the design of new communities on providing quality spaces for, and encouraging social interaction within the residents of these communities. These principles also advocate creating a unique sense of place.

- O -

Ordinance - a municipally adopted law or regulation.

Ozone - a pungent, colorless, toxic gas.

- P -

Park/ponding- The dual use of a property designated as a drainage area for both drainage and park and recreation purposes.

Pedestrian - an individual who travels on foot.

Pedestrian scale - the proportional relationship between an individual and his or her environment.

Pedestrian Friendly/Community-Oriented Design - A community designed on a human scale that promotes interaction among its residents, where stores, workplaces and services are located closer to homes. Keeping a mix of activities in the neighborhood is meant to build a stronger sense of community.

Percolation - downward flow or infiltration of water through the pores or spaces of rock or soil.

Phasing - development undertaken in a logical time and geographical sequence.

Performance standards:

Planning area:

Plat - (1) a map representing a tract of land showing the boundaries and location of individual properties and streets; (2) a map of a subdivision or site plan.

PM-10 - Particulate Matter-10:

potable water - water suitable for drinking or cooking purposes

Port-of-entry (POE): A location along the borders of a country where people and goods enter into that country.

Premature grading: when a site is graded but not developed for a long period of time

Principal use - the main purpose for which land or a building is designated or occupied.

Public improvement - any improvement, facility, or service together with its associated site or right-of-way necessary to provide transportation, drainage, utilities, or similar essential services and facilities that are usually owned and operated by a governmental agency.

- Q -

Quasi-public use - a use owned or operated by a nonprofit, religious, or eleemosynary institution and providing educational, cultural, recreational, religious, or similar types of programs.

- R -

Recharge - the addition to, or replenishing of, water in an aquifer.

Retrofit - to furnish with new parts or equipment

Residential density - the number of dwelling units per acre of residential land (density must be further defined in terms of net or gross).

ridership: The level of use that transit vehicles incur during daily service in the area served by the company.

Right of way - (1) a narrow parcel of land acquired by reservation, dedication, forced dedication, prescription, or condemnation and intended to be occupied by a road, crossways, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary storm sewer, and other similar uses; (2) generally, the right of one to pass over the property of another.

Riparian areas - areas situated on the banks of a river, lake or stream

Roadway capacity - see **capacity, roadway**

Runoff - the portion of rainfall, melted snow, irrigation water, and any other liquids that flows across ground surface and is eventually returned to streams.

- S -

Scenic corridor - an area visible from a highway, waterway, railway, or major hiking, biking, or equestrian trail that provides vistas over water, across expanses of land, such as farmlands, woodlands, or coastal wetlands, or from mountaintops or ridges.

Slope - the deviation of a surface from the horizontal, usually expressed in percent or degrees; the degree of inclination of land in relation to a horizontal plane.

Solar access - a property owner's right to have the sunlight shine on the owner's land.

Solar orientation- The strategic placement of buildings that maximize the amount of energy that buildings can receive from the sun.

Sprawl - uncontrolled growth, usually of low-density nature, in previously rural areas and some distance from existing development and infrastructure.

Standard of living - a measure of the adequacy of necessities and comforts in an individual's daily life in reference to the general populace.

Street beautification - improving the appearance of a street in accordance with a plan, including, but not limited to, the installation of landscaping, benches, street lighting, sidewalks, baskets and signage.

spatial linkages: A design concept that attempts to establish visual continuity along streets that connect important urban spaces to each other.

Street hierarchy - the system by which roads are classified according to their purpose and the level of service they provide.

Streetscape - a design term referring to all the elements that constitute the physical appearance of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, street paving, street furniture, landscaping, including trees and other planting, awnings, marquees, signs and lighting.

Study area - part of a comprehensive plan that provides specific planning and design proposals for a defined geographic area, usually prepared after the adoption of the local master plan which may be adopted as amendments to the comprehensive plan.

Subdivision - the division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, parcels, tracts, or other divisions of land for sale, development or lease.

Suburban area - a predominantly low-density residential area located immediately outside of and physically and socioeconomically associated with an urban area or a city.

Surface water - water on the earth's surface exposed to the atmosphere as rivers, lakes, streams and oceans.

sustainability: The ability of a system or project to sustain itself over a long period of time.

- T -

Tax abatement - full or partial exemption for a defined period of time of real estate taxes.

Tenure - for housing, denotes renter or owner occupied dwelling units

Traffic calming: Systems designed to slow down vehicular traffic in busy areas that interface with pedestrian elements.

Transit dependent: The dependence upon transit systems to provide transportation needs.

Transit-Oriented Design - Development and design that encourages access to public transit such as buses. One example is commercial or residential complexes near transit stations. The emphasis is on creating access to transportation choices other than the automobile, such as walking, bicycling and public transit.

Transportation Management Area:

- U -

Urban area - a highly developed area that includes, or is appurtenant to, a central city or place and contains a variety of industrial, commercial, residential and cultural uses.

Urban design - (1) the process of organizing the contextual

elements of the built environment (2) the process of planning the development of the built environment in a comprehensive manner to achieve a unified, functional, efficient and aesthetically appealing physical setting, with the end result being a place with its own character and identity.

- V -

Variance - permission to depart from the literal requirements of a zoning ordinance.

Village - (1) small, compact center of predominantly residential character but with a core of mixed use commercial, residential and community services; (2) this term does not necessarily refer to the form of incorporation of a municipality and is often smaller than a municipality.

Vista - A distant view over a broad or wide area.

- W -

wise water usage:

Wildlife habitat - land set aside as a special protected area for animals and birds that are indigenous to an area.

- Z -

Zone - a specifically delineated area or district in a municipality within which uniform regulations and requirements govern the use, placement, spacing and use of land and buildings.

Zoning - (1) the delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings; (2) in general, the demarcation of a city by ordinance into zones and the establishment of regulations to govern the use of the land and the location, bulk, height, shape, use and coverage of structures within each zone.

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